



**Enclosure 2a**  
**December 6, 2016**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**November 1, 2016**

**COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone, stated for the record that Council Member Forbes would not be attending the meeting, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**Present:** Daniel McConaghy, \*Colby Anderson, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, \*\*Barbara Cottam, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

**Absent:** Karin Forbes

[\*Ex-officio, non-voting member]

[\*\*Barbara Cottam arrived at 5:37 p.m.]

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

On a motion duly made by Joyce Stevos and seconded by Amy Beretta it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of November 1, 2016

**Vote:** 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

**YEAS:** Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

**NAYS:** 0

[Barbara Cottam arrived at 5:37 p.m.]

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**2a. Minutes of the October 11, 2016, Council Meeting**

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Amy Beretta, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the minutes of the October 11, 2016, Council Meeting

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

Members Gaines had to recuse herself from the vote as she did not attend the October 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

[Barbara Cottam arrived at 5:37 p.m.]

### **3. OPEN FORUM**

Tim Ryan, Executive Director, RI School Superintendents' Association, raised RISSA's concerns with the timeline of the public hearings and preliminary approval of charter-school requests, criteria used to evaluate charters, and the fiscal impact that charters pose on local communities.

Tim Duffy, Executive Director, RI Association of School Committees, echoed Mr. Ryan's concerns and stressed the need for RIDE to either delay the public-hearing process or offer additional hearings so that the fiscal impact can be debated during the public hearings and taken into account when decisions are made.

[Documents provided to the Council by Open Forum speakers are on file at the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.]

### **4. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER**

Commissioner Wagner began his report by highlighting the importance of leadership at all levels of the system and stated that earlier this summer RIDE, in coordination with the R.I. School Principals Association, launched a mini-grants application for \$350,000 in funding to support current principals and their leadership teams. RIDE held an information session in late September for principals and superintendents to launch the application process and to provide time for them to talk with potential partners (Center for Leadership and Educational Equity [RI based program], National Institute for Standards and Learning, New Leaders for New Schools, National Association for the Advancement of Teacher Education, and Teaching Matters). To help facilitate the work around expanded leadership and building leadership capacity in Rhode Island, RIDE hired Alexis Meyer, a model principal from the Cole Middle School in East Greenwich, as a Leadership Fellow for the current school year.

Next, Commissioner Wagner reported on the charter-school process that is currently underway. He expressed that he finds it a bit puzzling that, at the conclusion of two years of very public and very transparent legislative conversations about what the process should be around the approval of charter school expansions and new renewals, that the Council would open up a conversation that was just settled with timelines and that we would open up those timelines with our own interpretations of how the review and approval process should be run. RIDE intends to follow the law (Senate Bill 3075 Sub A as amended) that was adopted by the General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor earlier this year. This act amended the R.I. General Laws 16-77-5,1, 16-77.3, and 16-77.4.

Commissioner Wagner went over the timeline of discussions that RIDE had with the Council over the last few months:

- The Council discussed the new law and its effect on the approval of new or expanded charter public schools at three meetings this year.
- At the August 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, RIDE provided an overview of current status regarding charter approvals and the new statutory requirements.
- RIDE informed the Council that, in July, RIDE issued a request for proposals for new charters to open in the fall of 2017 and that RIDE would issue a request for proposals for charter expansions for Fall 2018.
- At the September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council, RIDE staff presented an overview of the new performance-review system for Rhode Island charters, which was developed in coordination with the charter sector as well as the public.
- At the October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council, RIDE staff presented a report and discussed the new statutory requirements and the procedure for the evaluation of new charter applications and charter expansion requests.

RIDE received two proposals for new charter public schools and six requests for expansion of existing charter public schools consistent with the laws outlined. In keeping with the procedures set forth in the new law on the establishment of charter public schools, RIDE is in the process of reviewing these charter applications.

As the law sets forth, the first step in the review process (16-77.3-3[b] and 77.4-3[b]) is a 60-day period for public comment, including public comment on the fiscal, educational, and programmatic impact, with at least 2 public hearings on each charter application. RIDE has begun the public-hearing process, and the period for public comment will end on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Some of these charters are slotted to open next fall; therefore we are on a time constraint as well as following the law.

After the period for public comment ends, the next stage in the process (16-77.3-3[c] and 77.4-3[c]) requires the Commissioner of Education to integrate all of the sources of information, including information gathered from the public-comment period, and decide whether to recommend to the Council the approval of the charter applications.

In making its decision on each recommendation, the Council must consider, among other factors, the fiscal, programmatic, and educational impact of the new or expanded charter public schools (RIGL 16-77.3-3(f) and 77.4-3(f)).

Commissioner Wagner stated that he is in the process of reviewing the public comment received and, after the period for public comment closes, he will submit his recommendations to the Council. It would be premature for him to make a recommendation prior to the conclusion of public comment about the fiscal, educational, and programmatic impact because part of the purpose of public comment is to gather information about the fiscal, educational, and programmatic impact.

The recommendations he will submit to the Council regarding charter approval will be public records, and he anticipates that the Council will discuss these applications and his recommendations at their December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting and will vote on the preliminary approval of the applications at the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. A vote on final approval of these applications will take place at a meeting of the Council in the spring, with the date to be determined.

In addition to the applications for new and expanded charters, two pending renewals of existing charters (Blackstone Academy and The Compass School) are going to be discussed this evening with a vote on December 6<sup>th</sup>. These two renewals are not affected by the new law, which applies only to applications for new charters or for the expansion of existing charters.

Commissioner Wagner ended by conveying that, although he understands that these issues are complicated and that there are lots of strong opinions on all sides of the issues, his role and the role of the RIDE staff is to guide the Council through, as is helpful, a navigation of the various statutory requirements as well as the various due-process pieces that need to be followed. RIDE does not intend to reinvent the timeline but to follow it as it is laid out in statute.

## **5. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **a. Core Arts Standards - Request for Endorsement**

Commissioner Wagner invited Sherilyn Brown, Executive Director, R.I. State Council on the Arts and Facilitator of the Arts Education Policy Group, to come to the table and introduce the Core Arts Standards, an initiative that the arts community asked RIDE to introduce last year. He explained that RIDE invites guests to the table only on rare occasions when it believes that there are gaps and the RIDE staff doesn't have the capacity to speak comprehensively about a particular topic.

Ms. Brown explained that the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) are quickly becoming the accepted national standards for arts education. Although Rhode Island has been using the Grade Span Expectations for a number of years, at this point the field has come to consensus about what the highest and best use of standards are, and the NCAS allow Rhode Island to have a national dialogue about standards, assessment practices, supports, and so on. She indicated that, although these are voluntary standards, people are coming to them very willingly as they were developed by and with input from all of our professional associates. One of the main reasons for adopting the NCAS is that they tend to be more process-focused rather than just skills-based, which has been a particular issue with the music community. They also include the Media Arts for the first time, which is very important because that's how students already think and express their learning, as well as the recognition of technology in the arts.

Surveys were conducted by the arts-educator associations with a follow-up survey by RIDE to determine whether arts educators are in favor of adoption of the NCAS by the Council. The results were overwhelmingly positive across districts and across arts disciplines.

Member Callahan asked for clarification that these new standards were an evolution of the work previously done in Rhode Island. Ms. Brown replied that it's not that the standards are completely new ideas, but rather slightly reconfigured to bring them into alignment with current standards for teaching and learning.

#### **b. Charter Schools – Requests for Renewals**

- Blackstone Academy
- The Compass School

Prior to turning the discussion over to Stephen Osborn, Chief of Innovation, and Brian Darrow, Director of College and Career Readiness, Commissioner Wagner explained that these two requests for renewals are the last two to be evaluated using the old performance framework.

Mr. Darrow went over what the old renewal evaluation process entailed:

- Renewal application submitted by the school;
- Data collection and analysis from over the past four years;
- Three-day site visit by RIDE staff in spring 2016; and
- Final RIDE renewal report.

The final report essentially sought to answer three questions:

- Is the school's educational program an academic success?
- Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?
- Is the school a viable organization?

Next, Mr. Darrow went over the Commissioner's recommendations for renewal of the Blackstone Academy and The Compass School and highlighted that going forward these two schools will be evaluated under the new performance framework, which is an annual report aligned to the new performance standards.

Member Beretta had some questions on Blackstone Academy's summary of ratings. She asked, when using the term "typical," how that compares with the composite index score when comparing like schools to like schools.

Mr. Darrow replied that the honest answer is that there isn't that big of a correlation, which is one of the exact reasons why RIDE moved to the new performance framework. What these indicators use is essentially a regression analysis to simply ask three questions:

- When looking at these schools via the school's individual performance and looking at its trajectory, whether the school essentially meet that trajectory benchmark, yes or no.
- How the school performed when looking at the corresponding sending districts.
- Comparison of student demographics.

Member Beretta expressed that she is heartbroken to see the school's performance in 2015-16. When looking at how the school is performing (typical and below typical) compared with similar schools from the same demographic perspective, which is being attributed to the transition to PARCC and the increase of the student body by 125 students, she is concerned with the Commissioner's recommendation for a five-year renewal. It makes more sense to her to ensure that the school is prepared for those additional 125 students, as Blackstone Academy is no different from any other school in dealing with the transition to PARCC and it didn't perform as well. She asked: Why are we saying that they are ready for a five-year renewal other than that we seem to have this mindset that we are not going to do renewals for a shorter period of time?

Mr. Darrow replied that, when looking at a renewal recommendation, RIDE looks at the school's track record of performance over the last five years. Although Blackstone Academy's performance declined this past year when compared with its sending districts, Blackstone Academy still does outperform the sending districts as well as other high-poverty high schools in the state. Blackstone Academy is the fifth-highest high-performing, high-poverty high school in the state.

Member Beretta voiced that there are a limited number of charter public schools that we can have as a state and that we are taking one of those slots for a school that in the past did terrific work, but seems to be struggling right now. Charter public schools are supposed to be models of innovation and really leading the path, and she has concerns with granting the school a five-year renewal based upon the school's current academic record.

Commissioner Wagner expressed that one of the things that we have to keep in mind in terms of context is that we are not seeing how 325 other schools would look in terms of assessment results in 2015-16, as it was a transition year to the PARCC assessment, which makes decisions hard based on having limited data. He said that, as Mr. Darrow indicated, RIDE looks at a school over a five-year track record instead of the most recent performance data that we have available.

Chair McConaghy asked whether the Council has latitude in offering a school less than a five-year renewal.

Commissioner Wagner replied that the Council has latitude to do what it would like to do; however, the length of a charter directly impacts the financial and organizational function of a charter.

Member Callahan expressed, and Member Purtill concurred, that they would be curious to see how these students performed in mathematics in their sending schools prior to enrolling at Blackstone Academy.

Member Stevos expressed that she does not like the idea that decisions are being made based on the school's one-year performance on the PARCC assessment and not looking at all the other positive aspects of the school, especially its low suspension rates.

Member Gaines asked that if the Council decides to grant the school a renewal of only three years and the school gets evaluated annually and is performing well can the Council then extend the three-year renewal to five years?

Deputy Abbott replied that the Council has the authority to intervene at any time.

At this time Commissioner Wagner introduced Carol Blanchette as the new Chief of RIDE's division of Teaching and Learning.

### **c. New Skills for Youth**

Commissioner Wagner provided a brief update on the process that the state has gone through over the last few months and the strategies being proposed in the three-year action plan to transform career education in Rhode Island.

He reported that he recently accompanied Governor Raimondo, Chair Cottam, and other Rhode Island stakeholders to Washington, D.C., to make a pitch for Rhode Island's plan to the Council of Chief State School Officers, which is distributing grant funds on behalf of JP Morgan Chase, to support the work.

Commissioner Wagner then turned the conversation over to Stephen Osborn, who walked the Council through a PowerPoint presentation on transforming Rhode Island's Career Preparation System. He highlighted the statewide public-engagement efforts to support the process and the needs-assessment and data-analysis key findings.

Commissioner Wagner expressed that one of the challenges in education is to move past the battle lines that have divided the system for so long. There are a few areas that really have that kind of broad support and consensus, and those areas tend to be early childhood as an investment in our future, leadership as an investment in our system, and doing a broader and better job around hands-on, career-relevant educational opportunities. While we continue to do the work around charter public schools, accountability, test scores, etc., we really have an opportunity to expand in these broad areas of broad support (early learning, leadership development, and doing a better job around relevance and engagement with career awareness).

Member Callahan suggested engaging the apprenticeship councils in the conversations, as their work leads to associate's degrees and pathways to those opportunities.

Member Gaines shared that, when it comes to diversity, many students who are determined to be "poverty" students in the Newport School System could not access paid internships last summer because the additional income affected their housing. She expressed the need to collaborate with social agencies in maybe getting some exceptions or some laws changed, as students of poverty are getting locked out of these programs.



**d. Proposed Revisions to the Board of Education Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island**

Commissioner Wagner recapped the discussion that took place at the October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting when Council members expressed that they were not pleased with RIDE's recommendation of a seven-year proposal for the Career and Technical Preliminary Certification.

Lisa Foehr, Director of Educator Excellence and Certification Services, joined the table and went over the new language that RIDE is proposing. The time period overall will still be a seven-year time period for an individual to be fully certified; however, the initial certificate will be issued for three years and will expire at the end of the three years. That expiration date triggers the individual to check in, similarly to how RIDE treats other certificates. If individuals meet that expectation, then they can renew that certificate for an additional four years.

Commissioner Wagner explained that the new proposed timeline makes it cleaner in terms of the review process, and then if individuals are not making adequate progress it makes it cleaner that they don't just get a renewal, as opposed to RIDE having to remove a certificate. RIDE debated whether to do a check-in at the end of the four-year mark versus the three-year mark and decided that doing it at the end of three years aligns with the teacher-tenure eligibility and it gives everyone a fair notice as tenure approaches as to whether or not individuals are on track for certification.

**e. Recommendation of Members to the YouthBuild Board of Trustees**

Prior to turning the conversation over to Brian Darrow, Commissioner Wagner explained that YouthBuild is a statutory entity that was created as a service provider to Providence and Central Falls to meet the need to close the gap that exists in Rhode Island for over-aged, under-accredited students whom we need to pay attention to. In order for YouthBuild to move forward, it needs to have a Board of Trustees, which requires Council approval.

Mr. Darrow explained that, similar to the appointment of members to the Boards of Trustees at the state-run schools, the Council has the statutory requirement to appoint members to the Board of Trustees of the YouthBuild Preparatory Academy from recommendations made by the Commissioner. In addition to the Commissioner's recommendations, the Board of Trustees will include an appointee of the Central Falls Board of Trustees and one appointee of the Providence School Board, which do not require Council approval. Once the Board of Trustees is in place, the trustees will come back to the Council with their proposed school plan for review.

Member Purtill suggested that, as the Board grows, the Council should think about including a couple of those students who either dropped out or became successful to add that voice of real-life, current experience.

## 6. ACTION ITEMS

### a. Approval of the Proposed Revisions to the Board of Regents Regulations Governing the Education of English Language Learners, for the purpose of public review and comment.

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Barbara Cottam, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the proposed revisions to the Board of Regents Regulations Governing the Education of English Language Learners, for the purpose of public review and comment.

Vote: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

### b. Approval of the Building Authority Capital Fund Projects

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves allocation of \$12,862,865 of the FY 2017 School Building Authority Capital Fund, as presented.

Vote: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**c. Approval of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island**

On a motion duly made by Joyce Stevos and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island, as presented.

Vote: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Marta Martinez, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Amy Beretta and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

**VOTED:** That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education adjourns.

Vote: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Daniel McConaghy, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karin Forbes, Jo Eva Gaines, Lawrence Purtill, and Joyce Stevos

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.